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RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1959

Index numbers of retail prices for the September quarter of 1959 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1959

City	Aggregate All Groups			All Groups, excluding Price Move- ments in Potatoes and Onions		
	Index Number	Increase from -		Index Number	Increase from -	
		Sept. Qtr., 1958	June Qtr., 1959		Sept. Qtr., 1958	June Qtr., 1959
		%	%		%	%
Brisbane ..	2595	4.5	1.7	2613	4.2	1.5
Toowoomba ..	2537	4.0	1.7	2553	3.5	1.6
Rockhampton ..	2608	6.2	1.8	2629	6.0	1.9
Townsville ..	2737	6.9	1.6	2758	6.3	1.5
Bundaberg ..	2571	4.3	1.3	2596	4.1	1.5
Weighted Average						
Five Towns ..	2600	4.7	1.6	2619	4.4	1.5

During the September quarter, 1959, the "C" Series index number for Brisbane rose by 1.7 per cent., being the greatest increase since the December quarter, 1958. In each of the four Queensland provincial cities for which the index is calculated, retail prices represented by the index rose at approximately the same rate, the increases ranging from 1.3 per cent. in Bundaberg to 1.8 per cent. in Rockhampton. Excluding the effect of onion and potato prices, which in some recent years have been subject to violent seasonal fluctuations, the rise in Brisbane was slightly less pronounced at 1.5 per cent.

Increased food and grocery prices were chiefly responsible for the rise, amounting to approximately three-quarters of Brisbane's total increase. Meat prices, especially beef, rose sharply in the month of June and continued to move upward at a fairly constant rate throughout each of the three months of the September quarter, thereby accounting for a large proportion of the food price rise. Onion prices also rose substantially, because of the short seasonal supply, while potatoes showed little variation in Brisbane.

The remaining groups, house rent, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous, each also recorded an upward trend but not as marked as that for food and groceries.

Changes in sections of the index are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1959

City	Food and Groceries			Clothing and Footwear		Miscellaneous Items	
	From Year Ended June, 1939	From June Quarter, 1959		From Year Ended June, 1939	From June Quarter, 1959	From Year Ended June, 1939	From June Quarter, 1959
	A	A	B				
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	251.2	3.0	2.5	308.0	0.9	150.8	0.4
Toowoomba	259.3	1.9	1.6	309.7	0.9	149.0	0.2
Rockhampton	239.9	3.0	3.1	300.6	0.7	165.8	0.2
Townsville	236.4	3.0	2.9	302.9	0.6	163.1	0.2
Bundaberg	240.8	2.5	3.1	306.6	0.7	151.4	0.2

Note. - A includes, and B excludes, price movements in potatoes and onions.

Food and Groceries

The food and groceries section, including potatoes and onions, increased in all cities, the rises being 1.9 per cent. in Toowoomba, 2.5 per cent. in Bundaberg and 3.0 per cent. in Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville. Substantially increased meat prices in all cities were mainly responsible, while onion and bacon prices also increased considerably. Higher bread prices operated throughout the State during the last month of the quarter. Potato prices remained practically unchanged in Brisbane and Toowoomba, but decreased elsewhere. Egg prices recorded a substantial decrease in all cities.

Clothing and Footwear

The upward movement recorded in this group during the previous quarter continued at much the same rate during the September quarter, ranging from 0.6 per cent. in Townsville to 0.9 per cent. in Brisbane and Toowoomba. Men's, women's, and children's footwear items continued to increase in price.

Miscellaneous

This section of the index was again fairly stable, recording the slight upward movement of 0.2 per cent. in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Bundaberg, and 0.4 per cent. in Brisbane.

Rent (4 and 5 roomed houses)

The rent index increased in Toowoomba, 5.8 per cent.; Rockhampton, 2.9 per cent.; Brisbane, 1.1 per cent.; and Townsville, 0.7 per cent; and remained unchanged in Bundaberg.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates

The Commonwealth industrial authority suspended automatic ("cost of living") adjustments after the adjustments which operated from the beginning of the first pay-period in August, 1953. Since that date, adjustments to the basic wages have been made from time to time, often on special applications, both by the Commonwealth and State industrial authorities. The latest of such applications to the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission resulted in the addition of 15s. to the male basic wage in all States, with corresponding adjustments to female and juvenile rates, to operate from 11th June, 1959. At present, the New South Wales basic wage alone is varied automatically with movements of the index numbers. In Queensland and Western Australia, the State Industrial Courts have usually varied the wage after the index numbers have been published. Following publication of the index numbers for the September quarter, 1959, the Queensland State Industrial Court added 4s. for males and 3s. for females to its basic wage rates, while in Western Australia the metropolitan basic wage was increased by 2s. 11d. for males and 1s. 11d. for females. In Sydney, an "automatic" increase of 2s. was applied to the male basic wage and 1s. 6d. for females.

Current basic wage rates are given in the following table.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates  
Australian Capital Cities

Capital City	Retail Price Index				Common-wealth Basic Wage	State Basic Wage			
	June Qtr., 1959		Sept., Qtr., 1959		Males <sup>a</sup>	Males	Females	Date of Operation	
	A	B	A	B					
Brisbane	2552	2575	2595	2613	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	26.10.59 <sup>b</sup>	
Sydney ..	2690	2696	2711	2719	14 3 0	13 19 0	10 9 0	1.11.59 <sup>b</sup>	
Melbourne	2684	2678	2706	2700	13 15 0	13 15 0	10 6 0	22. 6.59 <sup>b</sup>	
Adelaide	2625	2632	2665	2672	13 11 0	13 11 0	10 3 0	15. 6.59 <sup>b</sup>	
Perth ..	2803	2801	2830	2821	13 16 0	14 1 6	9 3 0	26.10.59 <sup>b</sup>	
Hobart ..	2787	2797	2819	2825	14 2 0	14 2 0	10 11 6	1. 7.59 <sup>b</sup>	

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

<sup>a</sup> Operative first pay-period beginning on or after 11th June, 1959. The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

<sup>b</sup> These rates operate from the first pay-period commencing on or after the date shown.

BRISBANE.

29th October, 1959

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## The "C" Series Retail Price Index

(Base for Each Section: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-27 = 1000)

City	Year Ended June, 1939	Year Ended June, 1959	Year Ended Sept., 1959	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1958	Dec., 1958	March, 1959	June, 1959	Sept., 1959
1. Aggregate - All Groups								
Brisbane ..	863	2528	2556	2484	2525	2550	2552	2595
Toowoomba ..	851	2480	2504	2440	2488	2497	2494	2537
Rockhampton ..	861	2521	2559	2456	2510	2558	2561	2608
Townsville ..	912	2646	2690	2561	2629	2700	2695	2737
Bundaberg ..	841	2508	2535	2465	2498	2532	2538	2571
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2531	2561	2483	2527	2557	2558	2600
2. All Groups EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a)								
Brisbane ..	863	2548	2574	2508	2547	2562	2575	2613
Toowoomba ..	851	2498	2520	2466	2508	2504	2513	2553
Rockhampton ..	861	2540	2577	2481	2533	2564	2581	2629
Townsville ..	912	2672	2713	2594	2660	2714	2718	2758
Bundaberg ..	841	2527	2552	2494	2519	2537	2557	2596
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2552	2579	2508	2550	2568	2580	2619
3. Food and Groceries								
Brisbane ..	856	2890	2936	2820	2874	2945	2919	3006
Toowoomba ..	814	2852	2888	2780	2858	2898	2870	2925
Rockhampton ..	895	2871	2942	2758	2822	2952	2953	3042
Townsville ..	955	3067	3139	2922	3030	3195	3119	3213
Bundaberg ..	903	2950	2998	2884	2916	2995	3003	3077
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2899	2949	2821	2881	2961	2934	3019
4. Food and Groceries EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a)								
Brisbane ..	856	2949	2993	2888	2939	2981	2987	3063
Toowoomba ..	814	2902	2932	2852	2916	2916	2923	2971
Rockhampton ..	895	2922	2992	2825	2882	2972	3010	3104
Townsville ..	955	3141	3206	3015	3121	3242	3185	3277
Bundaberg ..	903	3002	3049	2965	2975	3010	3057	3152
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	864	2958	3004	2891	2946	2994	2999	3076
5. Clothing and Footwear								
Brisbane ..	829	3337	3352	3322	3340	3331	3353	3382
Toowoomba ..	829	3360	3371	3354	3373	3347	3366	3396
Rockhampton ..	845	3348	3361	3334	3351	3346	3360	3385
Townsville ..	840	3341	3356	3324	3340	3337	3363	3384
Bundaberg ..	839	3379	3389	3371	3390	3369	3386	3411
Weighted Average Five Towns ..	831	3340	3355	3327	3344	3334	3356	3384

(a) Excluded as from September Quarter, 1955.